

1 THESSALONIANS

1:1-10 | STUDY GUIDE

Thessalonica

1 THESSALONIANS 1:1, "Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace." (ESV)

- Letter writing was a highly trained skill in the ancient world
 - Having a scribe copy your letter onto papyrus could cost as much as an entire day's wages
- Thessalonica was a Roman city, capital of the province of Macedon
 - Made a "free city"; allowed to govern itself
 - Largely due to its wealth and position along the Via Egnatia
 - Later leads to extravagance, such as the Emperor Galerius: palace complex covered over 1 million sqft (larger than the Louvre palace and museum in Paris)
- Silvanus and Timothy
 - Silvanus = Silas
 - Silas was present on Paul's second missionary journey, which is when they came to Thessalonica
 - Both Silvanus and Timothy are introduced to us in Acts
 - Paul had sent them back to Thessalonica to check on the church

1 THESSALONIANS 1:6, "And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit..." (ESV)

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- Paul is acknowledging that this hasn't been an easy time for believers in Thessalonica
 - Paul and Silas fled for their lives, so it's reasonable to assume that these followers weren't having an easy time either.
 - Furthermore, the church in Thessalonica was largely comprised of manual and trade laborers. They were not wealthy, and in fact, their conversion had resulted in ostracization, which significantly impacted their income.
 - That being said, their joy was very real—it was secure in the Holy Spirit
 - Likewise, their conduct reflected their newfound faith and not the society around them

1 THESSALONIANS 1:8, "our faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything."

- Their reputation proceeds them
- Their lives look radically different

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1 THESSALONIANS 1:9, "For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God..."

- Thessalonica was a major city with influences from all over
- Paul is preoccupied with only their spiritual well being

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Fant, Clyde E, and Mitchell G Reddish, A Guide to Biblical Sites in Greece and Turkey, Jung Unchan, A Tale of Two Churches